

—these ornamented the apartments. And as if to recall the salutary thought of death, in the midst of all that was gay and joyful there was painted, as was usual then, the celebrated dance, *Macabre*, on the walls under the piazza or colonnade.

The king was proud of his palace, and right royally did he receive his visitors. Our chronicler, after describing with much interesting detail the procession by torchlight, the reception of the archduke and duchess, and the ceremonies of introduction to the king and queen, continues his description of the apartments of the palace.

"The Grand Hall, by which the archduke and duchess entered, was of great size, and hung with a tapestry of the Destruction of Troy; and in the like manner also a chapel at the end of the hall. The room where the king dined, and where the archduchess was, was hung with a tapestry of a battle. Over the chimney was a grand mantle of cloth of gold, craped very rich. The chamber of young Madame Claude was next to the king's, and was hung with a tapestry of pastorals, all small, with inscriptions, which was very fine. Afterwards came the chamber of the queen, hung with a tapestry of strange beasts and birds, with figures from foreign countries; and in said room was a bed, all dressed out with cloth of gold, craped very rich; and above the bed a canopy of crimson damask. In the lodgings of the archduke there was a gallery, hung with tapestry of the deeds of the Trojans; after that a grand chamber, hung with tapestry of the actions of Alexander the Great, and a mantle over the chimney, of cloth of gold, craped. From the ceiling of this room hung two chandeliers, marvellously large, of silver, made crossways, for placing on each four flambeaux, which chandeliers hung by great chains of silver. At the end of this room was the chamber of the archduchess, where the said lady and gentleman slept, which was hung with cloth of gold, wove with black and red. Here were two beds, of which the one in which they slept was of stuff embroidered in gold, and curtains of the same, lined with white damask; and above this bed was a canopy, the top of cloth of gold, the curtains of taffety, yellow and red.

The other bed was furnished in the same manner, and on each were coverlets of cloth of gold, and inside them sheets of linen from Holland. All around the beds, and on the buffet were carpets of cloth of gold. In the corner by the bed was a gilt chair, admirably wrought by Italians, of which the seat, &c. was covered with cloth of gold, fringed all round with fringes of gold and silver. Before the chimney was another chair, also covered with cloth of gold, and there was carpet of the same stuff under it; also, there were many rich cushions in the room to sit upon."

And thus goes on our chronicler, describing every room: one hung with crimson velvet embroidered with K's and A's, crowned; another with crimson embroidered with cords and the arms of Burgundy; another with brocade; yellow and grey, powdered with S's in black velvet; another with crimson satin embroidered in flames of fire, and at the angles and in the centre were lions in wreaths, entirely covered in pearls, and which were mighty rich to see, and cost 40 to 50,000 ducats. And the chronicler further takes care to remark, that all the stuffs and tapestries were as fresh and good as new, and that the floors of all the rooms were covered with carpets of velvet, so that nothing of the floors was seen.

Thus was furnished this palace of a king of France at a time contemporary with the reign of our Henry VII.

At each extremity of the front of Louis XII., and forming part of the work erected by him, is a square tower of picturesque appearance. It contains a staircase of considerable elegance. The stairs radiate round a centre shaft, which is formed of clustering columns terminating in a crown at top, from which rises a vaulted ceiling. Though the construction and many of the details are Gothic, yet some of the ornaments partake of an Italian character.

From this staircase we pass to the part of the palace the most historically famous, the ancient *Salle des Etats*, a large building, of somewhat plain appearance, dating about the thirteenth century, although several alterations of a later period have been made to its windows,

&c. In this spacious hall the three estates of the kingdom used formerly to assemble. It has a rude and bare appearance; down the centre range a series of pointed arches, resting on columns supporting the roof, and dividing the ceiling into two parts, which are arched, and simply covered with flat boards. In the reign of Henry III. the states were summoned to meet here; and it was during their assembly that the powerful Duc de Guise was murdered in one of the apartments of the palace. The hall was then richly ornamented; the walls were hung with splendid tapestry, worked in figures, relieved with gold; the columns covered with purple velvet, powdered with gold *fleurs-de-lis*; and the ceiling was also covered with tapestry. A platform was raised nearly in the centre, behind one of the arches, on which was placed the throne of the king, all being covered with purple velvet, powdered with gold *fleurs-de-lis*, and on this, and on the steps to it, were seats for the blood royal; behind stood the archers of the guard; in front, and on either side, were the three estates, and in galleries at the end were seats for ladies;—the common people were also allowed to enter within certain barriers. The king descended from his apartments into the hall by wooden stairs at the end, but which stairs are now removed.

Adjoining the ancient *Salle des Etats*, and forming the northern side of the quadrangle, is that quarter of the palace erected by Francis I. This front, by the elegance of its proportions, the beauty of its details, and the grandeur of its effect, is by far the most imposing feature in the whole building, and a most tasteful specimen of the Renaissance style of architecture. The exterior front, towards the *Place des Jesuites*, I have already described; this, towards the interior court, is altogether different: here we have more elaborate decoration and greater delicacy of style. It is entirely of stone, and composed of two principal floors, decorated by pilasters and panellings; round the windows are interlaced enrichments, and the reveals are panelled, and were, I suspect, formerly relieved with colour. Above is an entablature of considerable richness and beautiful effect. Its modillions project to some extent, and above them is a kind of machicolation, containing shell enrichments in its recesses; over this rises an ornamental balustrade, formed of the letters F and C, for the initials of Francis I. and Claude of France. From the roof project dormer windows of graceful outline; and even the chimney-shafts are enriched, and by no means unworthy of remark. The roof itself was formerly created with an ornament composed of *fleurs-de-lis*, gilded. Below was formerly a colonnade supporting a gallery, as given by Ducerceau, which, although now removed, is about to be restored. But the principal object in this front, and which gives a charm to the whole, is the grand open staircase, situate about the centre of the façade, and projecting in front of it. This has lately been restored, and now shines forth in the full beauty of all its delicate and tasteful workmanship. The balustrades are formed of open curvings of foliage and the crawling salamander. Niches of most elaborate detail and elegant arabesques adorn the shafts of the pilasters; twining foliage is sculptured round the mouldings of the window openings;—in every part does ornament seem to clothe this magnificent work of art like the delicate foliage and clinging tendrils of the ivy clustering round a tree, yet nowhere does it superabound or appear misplaced.

The interior of this staircase is also ornamented with carved niches and enrichments; mounting its steps, we enter the suite of apartments on the first floor, being those formerly occupied by Queen Catherine de Medici. The first is called the *Salle des Gardes*, or guard chamber, a room of considerable size. The chimney-piece of stone, though massive in construction, is to be noticed for the elegance and richness of its ornaments; the stair door-frame is decorated, and has over it the salamander. In flames, the badge of Francis I. The ceiling here, as in most of the rooms in this building, is formed of beams, which are, in fact, the floor-joists of the room above; the effect of these, when painted, is by no means unpleasing. I made a sketch of the decorations lately executed on this ceiling, in which the initials, arms, and badges are mingled, with forcible contrasts of colour; whether the pre-

cise pattern is a restoration or not, I had no means of discovering; but there are many old examples of this mode of ornamenting the ceilings still remaining at Chenouevaux, Fontainebleau, and other places; and in Venice, almost all the older palaces have the ceilings decorated in this way, with arabesques and inlaid ornaments of great variety and beauty. The walls of this chamber are now bare, so they are all, in fact; nothing now remains of the splendour that dazzled the eyes, or the works of art that delighted the mind, during the time of Francis I. We pass through a multitude of rooms, but all are desolate alike—each has suffered the distressing calamity of whitewash—not a vestige of furniture, not a hanging remains. The chimney-pieces alone attest the magnificence and beauty with which the remainder must have been ornamented. I anticipated the pleasure of sketching these, which possess a rich fund of *renaissance* art, but a custodian abruptly prohibited my making further drawings; and I was thus prevented taking many details in the interior that might have proved interesting. The state-rooms seem to have been situated on this court-side of the building; and on the other, looking towards the *Place des Jesuites*, were the large bed-room and private apartments of the queen; amongst others, her cabinet. In this the walls are covered by carved panelling, the details of which are executed with much spirit and taste.

Again mounting the open staircase, we reach the floor above, the disposition of the rooms on which is exactly similar to the one we have left. These were the apartments occupied by King Henry III. You enter first the *Salle des Gardes*, which served also as a council chamber; from hence you pass into the king's bed-room, a very spacious apartment looking towards the *Place des Jesuites*. Here occurred the tragedy of the murder of the celebrated Duc de Guise.

The cabinet of the king is next this chamber; it is a small room, which still retains some traces of decorations. On the ceiling are to be distinguished slight remains of colouring, and arabesque ornament in fresco may still be seen on the linings of the window recess. On the left of the bed-chamber you enter a sort of passage which leads to the old Tour des Oubliettes or Donjon, of which so many horrors are related; at present nothing but bare walls of considerable thickness are to be seen.

Above this second floor are a range of rooms in the roof, but these contain no ornamental or interesting feature of any kind except that a most extensive view of the adjoining country is to be obtained from the open gallery outside them.

Of the west front I have little to say; it is that erected by Gaston d'Orleans, in the time of Louis XIII. As a structure away from these middle age remains, it would probably be admired, but here it is thoroughly out of place. It stands on the site of a part of the ancient chateau erected by the old Dukes of Orleans.

Before leaving the Château de Blois, I must not omit to call attention to an old tower, used subsequently as an observatory and astrological study by Catherine de Medici.

JOHN GREGORY CRACK.

THE BRITTON TESTIMONIAL.—One of a series of dinners, to which we have before referred, arranged by those gentlemen who are interesting themselves most in the testimonial to our excellent old friend, Mr. Britton, was given at Long's Hotel, on Wednesday evening last. Mr. Britton was there, and Mr. William Took, Mr. Gould, Mr. Thomas Cobitt, Mr. Herbert, Mr. Lewis Pocock, Mr. Griesell, Mr. Gibbons, and Mr. William Jerdan. Mr. Peter Cunningham and Mr. Godwin were the hosts. Mr. Britton read a pleasant sketch of the progress of what has become the "Britton Club," and "Literature," "Art," the "Constructive Sciences," and "Friendship," were duly honoured and responded to. Her Majesty the Queen has forwarded a subscription of ten guineas to the fund, and Lord Lansdowne, the Dean of Westminster, Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, Mr. Crofton Croker, the Rev. Thomas Dale, Sir Thomas Phillips, Sir Thomas Dean, &c., have added their names to the list of subscribers.

* The account of Chambers next week.